Tractatus Theologicus de Vitio Luxuriae

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PREFACE

To open a theological treatise on the vice of lust is to begin not with a list of prohibitions, but with a radiant affirmation of the human person as a masterpiece created *Imago Dei* (Gen 1:27). Our physical existence is never a mere accident of biology; it is a deliberate reflection of the divine life. The human body, as the visible expression of a spiritual nature, reveals our capacity for relationship. This relational capacity is intended to echo the eternal communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (CCC 221). In St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body, we encounter "Original Nakedness," a primordial state of the heart. In this state, the body was experienced as a sacrament, a visible sign of an invisible spiritual reality (MW 19:4). Such a vision affirms the dignity and unity of the human person, providing the foundation for understanding the disorders of concupiscence.

This primordial state revealed the transparency of the spiritual soul through its bodily expression, wherein the first man and woman, in the light of Original Justice, perceived the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" (MW 15:1). The human person, as a hylomorphic composite, is naturally ordered toward a sincere, total gift of self. Within this divine architecture, the body functions as a "language" of the person, expressing inherently unitive and procreative love (GS 24). Fulfillment is discovered only through this self-donative act, and desire was originally a holy eros perfectly integrated into the agape of selfless sacrifice, ensuring the other was always affirmed as a persona and never reduced to an object of utility. We must contemplate this "beginning" because it provides the teleological standard for human dignity. The disordered darkness of lust can only be measured against the brilliant light of the vocation for which the soul was created as *forma corporis*.

Every human longing serves as a teleological homing signal for Original Innocence, the primordial state where the sensitive appetite was perfectly integrated with the rational soul. Consequently, the study of lust is an investigation into the "Great Mystery" of our hylomorphic nature, wherein the body acts as a sacramental icon of divine love. We are not souls imprisoned in matter, but a substantial unio where the body, as the forma corporis, is the very medium through which holiness is instantiated (CCC 365). This inquiry invites the reader to view the body not as a source of shame, but as a temple of divine intention and a legitimate instrument of sanctifying grace. By grounding our study in the metaphysical goodness of creation, we ensure that the critique of lust is always subordinate to a greater affirmation of the person's dignity. In this light, the struggle against disordered desire becomes a noble quest to restore the Original Justice and harmony of the soul's faculties.

The entrance of sin introduced a profound ontological rupture into human nature, fracturing the hylomorphic harmony wherein the rational soul, as forma corporis, exercised perfect dominion over the sensitive appetites. This disruption birthed concupiscence, a disordered inclinatio toward sensible goods that bypasses the governance of reason and the orientation of the will toward the teleological end of self-gift (CCC 2515). Consequently, the transparency of "Original Nakedness" was obscured by protective shame, which now acts as a necessary guardian of the person's sacramental dignity when the body is no longer perceived as a medium of communion but as an object of utility (MW 28:1). Within this scholastic framework, the vice of lust is revealed as a profound interior disharmony that fractures the Original Justice and the Trinitarian analogy for which the human person was created.

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Shame is actually a sign of our high value, a theological boundary marker indicating that the body is now under threat from what the Church calls the "Predatory Gaze." Lust acts as a heavy veil that prevents us from seeing the interiority and the sacred mystery of the other person, focusing instead on the external "value" of the body and for the sake of one's own pleasure (MW 32:3). St. John Paul II describes this as a "reduction" of the person, where the human being is stripped of their unique, unrepeatable identity and treated as a commodity or an object of use. This state is often called *Incurvatus in se,* a Latin phrase from the tradition of St. Augustine and Martin Luther described a heart that "curved in on itself," where our desire no longer reaches out to bless the other but loops back to serve the ego. This turning inward is a theological crisis because it represents a rejection of our vocation to be a gift, turning a "communion of persons" into a lonely transaction of sensations. In this darkness, we lose the ability to "read" the language of the body, and we begin to treat the physical self as if it were disconnected from the spirit.

Lust is a form of spiritual amnesia that makes us forget the "face" of our neighbor in favor of a fragmented feature that we wish to possess. We find ourselves caught in a struggle where the "law of the members" wars against the "law of the mind," leaving us alienated from our own deepest identity as children of God (Rom 7:23). This conflict is not a sign that the body is evil, but that our desires have been wounded and need the healing touch of the Creator. We must acknowledge this wound honestly if we are to seek the remedy that Christ offers in the Gospel.

Central to this investigation is the "Personalist Principle," a core tenet of Catholic thought which asserts that a person is a kind of good toward which the only proper and adequate attitude is love (*Love and Responsibility* [LR] 41). Lust stands as the direct antithesis of this principle because it intentionally ignores the soul of the other to focus on the biological utility or the aesthetic appeal of the flesh. By isolating the sexual value from the person as a whole, lust commits what can be described as a "sacramental lie" with the body, using physical gestures to say "I love you" while the heart is actually saying "I want you" (MW 104:1). This separation of the "unitive" meaning from the "procreative" meaning of our sexuality is a primary manifestation of the lustful spirit, as it refuses to participate in the creative power of God (*Humanae Vitae* 12). When we act out of lust, we are effectively "desacramentalizing" the body, treating the most sacred parts of our humanity as if they were just biological buttons to be pushed for a temporary high. This dualism is a heresy of the heart that denies the unity of our nature, pretending that what we do with our bodies does not deeply affect our souls.

We must remember that you cannot touch a body without touching a person, and to use a body is to wound a person's inherent right to be loved for their own sake (LR 41). Lust promises a feast of connection but delivers only the crumbs of self-stimulation, leaving the heart more parched and hollow than it was before the act. It is a tragic detour because it seeks the "infinite" satisfaction we crave in a "finite" sensation that can never hold the weight of our eternal longings.

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The Church's moral "no" to lust is therefore a resounding "yes" to the incredible dignity of every human being, asserting that no one should ever be a means to an end. This treatise argues that the battle against lust is not a battle against pleasure, but a battle for the integrity of the "Gift" that we are called to be. Only by reclaiming this "Personalist Principle" can we begin to see the human person as they truly are: a reflection of the infinite and beautiful mystery of the Creator. Every act of lust is a failure of imagination, a failure to see the eternal weight of glory in the person standing before us.

The remedy for the disorder of lust is found in Christ's "appeal to the heart" during the Sermon on the Mount, where He speaks of the gravity of "adultery in the heart" to call us toward a deeper healing (Matt 5:27-28). Christ's words are not meant to burden us with more guilt, but to offer us a "heart surgery" that points toward the "Redemption of the Body," a process where grace begins to straighten out our disordered cravings (Rom 8:23). This redemption begins with a "Metanoia," a total transformation of our minds and our ways of seeing that allows us to perceive the world through the eyes of the Spirit. The *Theology of the Body* emphasizes that Christ did not come to abolish our desires or to make us asexual beings, but to restore our desires to their original purity and life-giving purpose (MW 48:3). This restoration is the work of the Holy Spirit, who breathes new life into our parched affections and helps us to integrate our passions into the service of a love that is truly great (Gal 5:16).

Purity of heart is not the absence of desire, but the "fullness of the heart" that allows desire to be governed by the truth and reverence that every person deserves (MW 58:6). It requires a "spiritualization" of the body, where the physical appetites are no longer unruly masters but are guided by a spirit that seeks the true good of the "other." This process of integration allows us to move from being a "man of concupiscence" who is driven by cravings to a "man of the beatitudes" who is driven by the peace of God. We are called to a "higher righteousness" that recognizes the body as a "Temple of the Holy Spirit," a sacred space where the presence of the Living God dwells and acts (1 Cor 6:19). This theological shift transforms the struggle against lust from an exhausting series of "don'ts" into a joyful and confident "yes" to the beauty of God's plan for human love.

The Cross of Christ provides the power to "crucify" the old habits of using others and to "put on" the new way of loving that Jesus modeled for us (Eph 4:22-24). Through this paschal mystery, our desire is not suppressed but liberated to become a flame of love that warms the world rather than consuming it. Purity, therefore, is the "glorification" of the body in our current earthly life, a participation in the light of the Transfiguration.

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The final horizon of this theological journey is "Eschatological Man," referring to the state of the human person in the Resurrection and the glorious "last things" for which we were made (Matt 22:30). Our current struggle with lust is a temporal reality that will be utterly surpassed when we enter into the "Beatific Vision," the direct and face-to-face seeing of God's infinite beauty (CCC 1023). In the Resurrection, the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" will find its perfect and eternal fulfilment, not in earthly marriage, but in the union between Christ the Bridegroom and the redeemed Church (Rev 19:7). There will be no more lust in heaven because there will be no more "reduction" or "shame"; we will see each other exactly as God sees us, fully transparent and perfectly loved (MW 68:4). The *Theology of the Body* reminds us that earthly marriage and the sexual urge are "signs" that point toward this greater heavenly reality, but they are not the destination itself. Lust is a tragic mistake because it tries to find the "heaven" of total satisfaction in a passing sensation that is divorced from the eternal Spirit of God.

By practicing "Chastity" and self-mastery in this life, we are actually practicing for the freedom of heaven, learning the language of total, selfless love before we reach our true home (CCC 2337). This eschatological hope provides the ultimate motivation for our moral life, proving that our hearts were made for a love that the world, on its own, can never fully satisfy. We are "pro-leptic" people, meaning we try to live out the truth of our future heavenly glory right here in the middle of our earthly struggles and brokenness. This treatise concludes by affirming that the victory over lust is a participation in the victory of Christ over death and all forms of alienation between the flesh and the spirit.

Our bodies are not destined for the corruption of disordered passion, but for a transfigured existence where every desire is satisfied in the light of the Most Holy Trinity. We look forward to a day when our bodies will shine the light of our souls, and our capacity to love will be as wide and as deep as the ocean of God's mercy. This is the hope we hold onto: that our bodies are made for life, for the gift of self, and for an eternity of joy in the presence of the One who is Love. Our longing for union is not a mistake, but a sacred prophecy of the communion that awaits us in the heart of God. The profound ontological density of the human person must be understood as a radical "embodied spirit," a substantial and irreducible unity where the physical and the metaphysical are not merely adjacent but are so deeply interpenetrated that the body itself becomes a "theological word" spoken by the Creator into the silence of the material world.

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In the luminous and revolutionary vision of the *Theology of the Body,* the flesh is the very threshold of the divine, for as St. John Paul II articulately argued, "the body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine; it was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it" (MW 19:4). This means that every biological impulse, every aesthetic curvature of the frame, and every capacity for physical sensation is saturated with a "theological purpose" that transcends the mere survival of the species or the fleeting relief of a tension; it is a "sacramental" reality that points toward the eternal communion of the Trinity, inviting the human person to participate in a love that is fundamentally "ordered" toward the infinite and the absolute.

When we approach the vice of lust, we are not simply dealing with an "overactive" appetite or a failure of biological self-control, but with a profound "metaphysical theft" an attempt to seize the "sacramental sign" of the body while violently rejecting the "covenantal reality" of the person which it points, thereby reducing a divine icon to a mere instrument of egoistic satisfaction and temporary physical relief. Lust acts as a form of spiritual "centripetal force," drawing all perceptions of the "Other" inward toward the dark, hungry gravity of the ego, whereas the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" is fundamentally "centrifugal," a movement of the self that breaks through the boundaries of solitude to encounter the mystery of the person in a "Communion of Persons" (*Communio Personarum*).

To re-humanize our understanding of this struggle, we must insist that the body is not an object we "have," like a tool or a garment, but a manifestation of the person we "are"; therefore, to lust after a body is to attempt the impossible and tragic task of loving a shadow while ignoring the light that casts it, a process that inevitably leaves the seeker in a state of ontological malnutrition, starving for the very intimacy they are systematically destroying through their own "predatory graze." This starvation is the direct result of "desacramentalizing" the human form, turning a window into a wall and treating the "temple of the Holy Spirit" as if it were a common warehouse for the storage of fleeting sensory gratifications, thereby denying the "prophetic" character of the flesh which is meant to proclaim, through the language of the gift, the "Great Mystery" of God's love.

The transition from the primordial state of "Original Nakedness" to the "Concupiscence" of the heart represents a tectonic shift in the "Architecture of Desire," where the "Inner Freedom of the Gift" was replaced by a compulsive, anxious, and disordered drive to "grasp" and possess that which can only be truly discovered as a gift received in freedom. In the primordial state of "Original Innocence," the man and the woman were "naked and not ashamed" (Gen 2:25), not because theory were morally oblivious or physiologically unaware of their sexual differences, but because they possessed a "purity of heart" that allowed them to see the divine image in one another with such radiant and penetrating clarity that the physical became a transparent window to the soul, unburdened by the fear of being used or the desire to dominate.

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This was the "Sacramental Vision" of the beginning, where the body "spoke" a language of total, unreserved self-donation, a "sincere gift of self" that was perfectly aligned with the "Spousal Meaning of the Body" and the creative, life-giving intent of the Father, ensuring that the human person was always treated as a subject of love and never as an object of use. However, the entrance of sin introduced a "rupture" in this communication, turning the "language of the body" into a "babble of cravings" where the signifier is violently severed from its eternal signified, and the body is viewed through the lens of "utility" rather than the lens of "sanctuary."

Lust is the primary manifestation of this rupture; it is a "reductionist" heresy that treats the "Someone" as a "Something," effectively "de-souling" the body so that it can be consumed without the "burden" of a relationship or the ontological responsibility of a covenant. In this state of 'Historical Man," we find ourselves *Incurvatus in se* (curved in on ourselves), where our desire for the infinite is tragically misdirected toward the finite, leading us to seek "heaven" in a sensation that can only ever be a "signpost" pointing toward a destination we refuse to visit in truth. To recover our humanity, we must engage in a "Theological Archeology," digging through the sedimented layers of our own disordered passions to find the "Original Longing" that still pulses beneath them, the longing to be seen, known, and loved for our own sake, as a "sincere gift" that can only be fulfilled in the "mutual giving" that echoes the Trinitarian life, for it is only in the "sincere gift of self" that man truly finds his identity, his dignity, and his ultimate peace.

As we delve deeper into the "Somatic Gospel," we must confront the "Theology of the Gaze" as the primary battleground of our redemption, recognizing that the eye is the "lamp of the body" (Matt 6:22) which either illuminates the person in their full, unrepeatable dignity or casts them into the darkness of utility, fragmentation, and commodification. In the *Theology of the Body,* the "Redemption of the Heart" is described as a "re-education" of our vision, a grace-filled "catharsis" where the Holy Spirit begins to "heal the cataracts" of lust so that we can once again perceive the "Iconic" value of the human frame as a participant in the "Great Mystery" of Christ's love for the Church. This is not a repressive exercise of "not looking" which would be a Manichaean negation of the goodness of creation, but a transformative exercise of "looking differently,"seeing the "other" not as a collection of aesthetic values to be harvested for my ego, but as a "mystery" to be venerated and a "neighbor" to be served with the same reverence one would accord to a liturgical vessel on the altar of the Most High.

This "Redeemed Gaze" is essentially "Eucharistic in its logic; it recognizes that the body of the other is "holy ground," a temple of the Holy Spirit that is not "mine" to take or control, but is "God's" to give and mine to receive with trembling, selfless gratitude. When we treat the body as a "Temple," we are participating in the "Spousal Ethos" of Christ, who did not come to be served but to serve, and who gave His body totally so that we might have life, thereby proving that the highest use of our human freedom is the "voluntary limitation" of that freedom for the sake of the other's flourishing.

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Lust, by contrast, is a "parasitic" love that seeks to live off the life-force of the other, draining the personhood from the flesh until only an empty shell remains, whereas authentic love, the love that "spiritualizes" the body, seeks to lay down its life so that the other might find their true place in the "Communion of Persons." This transformation of the gaze is the foundational work of the "New Man," who sees in the body of the other not a target for conquest, but a sister or brother in the flesh, a fellow traveler toward the beatitude of the Father's house.

Furthermore, we must ground our investigation in the "Marian and Virginal Dimension of Purity," for in the Blessed Virgin Mary, we see the perfect integration of *Eros* and *Agape*, where the body is so entirely "receptive" to the divine will that it becomes the literal "Tabernacle" of the Infinite Word. Mary's purity is not a sterile or fearful "no" to the body, but a monumental, fertile, and live-giving "Yes" to the Spirit, proving that the body reaches its most profound "spousal" fulfillment when it is most fully surrendered to the "Nuptial Meaning" of God's love. Lust is the violent refusal of this receptivity; it is an "active aggression" that seeks to dominate and violate the "sacred space" of the other rather than to receive them as a gift, attempting to penetrate the mystery of the body is a "place of encounter," and that our sexuality is not a problem to be solved by suppression, but a "mystery" to be lived out in the radiant light of the Incarnation, where the flesh is made "holy" by the presence of the God-man.

To live a "humanized" theology of the body is to recognize that we are called to a "Virginal Heart," a heart that is so "whole," "unfragmented," and "integrated" by grace that it can see God in every person and every person in God, without the distortion of the "predatory gaze." This is the "Spiritualization of the Flesh" that our treatise aims to facilitate, moving the reader from the 'atomization" of concupiscence to the "integrity" of a heart that is once again capable of "Original Nakedness," where the body is no longer a source of shame or a target of exploitation, but a radiant "Sign of the Gift" that points toward the "Marriage of the Lamb," reflecting the purity of the Mother who held the Word in her womb and whose "Fiat" remains the ultimate model for the human use of the body as a response to Divine Love.

Our theological journey must culminate in a formal "Vision of the Eschaton," where the "Redemption of the Body" finds its ultimate teleological fulfillment in the General Resurrection and the Beatific Vision. Within the rigorous hylomorphism of St. Thomas Aquinas, the human person is defined as a *unio substantialis*; consequently, the soul's final beatitude necessitates reunification with the body, for the rational soul, as the unique *forma corporis*, remains in an ontologically incomplete state when separated from its material expression. We do not advance towards a state of disembodied spirit which would constitute a tragic betrayal of our nature as "incarnate spirits" but toward the "Resurrected Flesh," where the body is glorified, transfigured, and divinized through the soul's perfect participation in the Divine Essence. In this eschatological state, the body is entirely "spiritualized," not by the negation of its materiality, but through the total subjection of the material to the spiritual, expanding our capacity for communion so that we may behold the Divine Essence as He is and see one another in the "unbearable light of glory."

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In this final restoration of Original Justice, the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" attains its ultimate intensity, serving as a perpetual sacrament of Trinitarian life wherein the human person is naturally ordered to a total, unitive, and procreative self-gift within the celestial liturgy. In this glorified state, the "disordered gaze" of concupiscence is rendered ontologically impossible; as the rational soul achieves its final end in the Beatific Vision, every faculty of the person, the intellect in its apprehension of Truth, the will in its adherence to the Good, and the sensitive appetites in their rest is perfectly and eternally oriented toward the Absolute Good. The body then becomes the transparent medium of the person's holiness, the *forma corporis* no longer obscured by the density of sin or the weight of mortality, but analogically reflecting the eternal processions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without the slightest trace of fracture, shame, or fear.

Within this rigorous scholastic and hylomorphic framework, the body is revealed as the very theater of divinization, where the material is not discarded as an accidental shell but is assumed into the divine life through the Resurrection of the Flesh. Because the soul is the substantial form of the body, the glorification of the spirit necessarily overflows into the physical dimension, transfiguring the body into a "spiritual body" that remains truly material yet perfectly subject to the soul's participation in the Light of Glory. Therefore, the struggle against the vice of lust in this present life is not a mere adherence to legalistic prohibitions or a Manichaean rejection of the flesh, but a rigorous, ascetic, and noble quest for the restoration of this original harmony. It is a participation in the "Redemption of the Body." a patient discipline of an eternal longing for that celestial concord where the substantial union of soul and body will forever manifest the communion of the Holy Trinity.

This treatise serves as a theological threshold, an invitation to the reader to behold their own embodiment not as an unwanted shell or a source of ignominy, but as a temple of divine intention and a legitimate medium of sanctifying grace. By grounding our study in the metaphysical goodness of creation and the certain hope of the Eschaton, we ensure that our critique of disordered desire is always subordinate to a greater, more radiant "Yes" to the beauty of the human person. We must recognize that the virtue of temperance is not the suppression of the body's vitality, but the integration of that vitality into the person's higher vocation. This is the brilliant light of the vocation for which we were made, providing only the standard by which the darkness of lust can be truly understood and ultimately overcome in the pursuit of perfection and charity. Thus, we conclude this preface and begin our descent into the study of vice, ever mindful that the shadows we encounter are but the absence of the great light for which our nature is intended.

Chapter 1: The Nature and Definition of Lust

Question 1: On the General Essence of Lust
Question 2: On the Object of Lust
Question 3: On the Relation of Lust to the Rational Soul
Question 4: On Lust as a Capital Vice
Question 5: On the Primacy of the Nuptial Meaning
Question 6: On the Sensitive Appetite and Lust
Question 7: On Lust and the State of Original Justice
Question 8: On the Species of Lust in General
Question 9: On the Internal Acts of Lust
Question 10: On the Relationship Between Lust and Shame.

Question 1: On the General Essence of Lust

Article 1: Whether lust is a sin?
Article 2: Whether lust is a mortal sin by its genus?
Article 3: Whether lust consists primarily in a disordered pursuit of venereal pleasure?
Article 4: Whether the essence of lust is a formal rejection of the *Imago Dei*?
Article 5: Whether lust is a sin of the soul, the body, or the *unio substantialis?*
Article 6: Whether the rational soul as *forma corporis* is functionally compromised by lust?
Article 7: Whether lust is contrary to the right reason of the person?
Article 8: Whether lust constitutes a "lie" spoken through the language of the body?
Article 9: Whether lust is more grievous than other carnal sins of different species?
Article 10: Whether lust is the most dangerous of the capital vices due to its proximity to the person?
Article 11: Whether the pleasure of lust is inherently evil or merely its disorder?
Article 12: Whether the disorder of lust lies in the intensity of the passion or its object?
Article 13: Whether lust necessarily involves a formal turning away from the Unchangeable Good?
Article 14: Whether lust obscures the "Nuptial Meaning" of the body as a sacrament?
Article 15: Whether lust is a sin against the theological virtue of Charity?
Article 16: Whether lust can be completed in the imagination without a physical act?
Article 17: Whether lust is a species of idolatry where the creature is preferred to the Creator?
Article 18: Whether the root of lust is found in a lack of interior self-possession?
Article 19: Whether lust is ontologically distinct from the natural procreative urge?
Article 20: Whether lust is essentially a failure to recognize the other as a "someone?"

Q1:A1 - Whether Lust is a Sin?

Objection 1: It would seem that lust is not a sin, but rather a necessary biological exigency essential to the *forma corporis* and the teleological ends of nature. The human person is defined in the hylomorphic tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas as an *unio substantialis,* a composite in which the rational soul is the unique substantial form of the material body. Within this ontological structure, the body possesses a natural *inclinatio* toward those operations which ensure the preservation of the species, a drive that is not a mere accident of biology but a constitutive element of the human person's physical existence. The venereal impulse is a fundamental movement of the concupiscible appetite, an expression of the *vis vitalis* (vital force) that aims at the continuation of the human race through procreative union. As Aquinas famously posits in the *Summa Theologiae,* the natural is not a sin, for every natural inclination proceeds from the Divine Wisdom which is the primary author of nature.

Furthermore, if we integrate the insights of the Theology of the Body, we must recognize that the body is a "sacrament of the person," a visible sign of an invisible spiritual reality. The intense attraction toward the other, often labeled as lust, could be interpreted as the body "speaking" the language of its own nuptial meaning, a primordial recognition of the "Original Nakedness" that characterized the state of innocence. If the body is intended to be a medium of communion, then the powerful drive toward that communion appears to be a celebratory affirmation of the *Imago Dei* rather than a moral transgression. To characterize this profound biological and ontological "homing signal" as a vice would seem to lapse into a dualistic or Manichaean error, effectively casting aspersions upon the very material substrate that the Creator declared "very good" (Gen 1:31). Thus, the pursuit of carnal pleasure, insofar as it fulfills the biological and sacramental design of the *forma corporis*, appears to be a neutral or even virtuous participation in the creative order of God, rather than a formal sin.

Objection 2: It would seem that the attraction typically identified as lust is not a sin, but rather a profound theological recognition of the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" as a sacrament of the person. Within the framework of the Theology of the Body, we must recognize that the human body is a visible, physical sign of an invisible, spiritual, and divine reality; it is the "sacramental" medium through which the *Imago Dei* is expressed in the material world. This primordial state of "Original Nakedness" allowed the first man and woman to see in one another a call to communion that was perfectly integrated with the Divine Will. If the body is ontologically "wired" for a sincere and total gift of self, then the intense, visceral desire for union with another person which the world often somberly labels as lust is actually the body's legitimate "language" of love, a holy *eros* seeking the *agape* of selfless sacrifice.

Furthermore, because the rational soul is the unique *forma corporis*, every movement of the body's appetites must be seen as a participation in the soul's orientation toward the Good. If the human person finds fulfillment only through a sincere gift of self (GS 24), then the powerful attraction toward the other is simply the teleological fulfillment of our nature as "incarnate spirits" intended to echo the eternal communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To classify such a profound and beautiful "homing signal" for Trinitarian life as a vice would be to deny the very "Original Innocence" that defines our true identity. Therefore, what is perceived as lust is not a "disordered desire" but an "ordered transparency" of the spirit through the flesh, making it a virtuous affirmation of the person's dignity rather than a transgression against the Eternal Law of God. Thus, the carnal impulse remains a sacred medium of grace, manifesting the brilliance of the vocation for which we were created.

Objection 3: It would seem that lust cannot be classified as a sin because it resides primarily within the sensitive appetite as an antecedent passion, often bypassing the deliberative faculty of the rational soul. In the Thomistic psychology of the human person, a moral act requires the formal cooperation of the intellect and the free consent of the will; however, lust frequently manifests a sudden "inner tilt" or spontaneous movement of the concupiscible appetite that precedes any rational judgement. Since these first movements of the flesh arise from our hylomorphic nature and its inherent "vital energy," they appear to be movements of the *anima* (life principle) rather than the *ego* (the choosing subject). If the rational soul as *forma corporis* is not yet engaged in an act of *imperium* or command, these impulses lack the necessary "human act" quality required for the imputation of guilt or the stain of vice.

Furthermore, if we consider the Theology of the Body, we recognize that the "Original Nakedness" of the beginning involved a primordial spontaneity of the heart where desire and spirit were perfectly unified. Within this state of Original Innocence, the visceral attraction toward the other was a transparent and holy expression of the body's nuptial meaning, untainted by the fear of being used. If our current experience of intense carnal longing is merely a fractured remnant of that original transparency, then it should be viewed as a biological and spiritual "echo" of our high calling to communion rather than a formal rejection of the Divine Law. To label such a persistent and involuntary inclination as a sin would be to condemn the very "body-soul" composite for being true to its own substantial union. Therefore, as these passions often lack the voluntary character essential to sin, they should be regarded as a neutral manifestations of our incarnate existence, existing as a "pre-moral" medium of our vocation to love rather than a disordered transgression of reason. Thus, the carnal impulse remains a sacred medium of grace, manifesting the brilliance of the vocation for which we were created.

Q1: A1 - Whether Lust is a Sin?

Objection 4: It would seem that lust is not a sin because its finality is directed toward a created participation in the Good, thereby serving as an analogical reflection of the Trinitarian communion. In the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas, every agent acts for an end that is perceived as a good, and since the human person is a masterpiece created *Imago Dei,* the desire for union with another person is fundamentally a desire for a "sacramental" encounter with the Divine Image. To seek communion with a rational subject is to seek a reflection of the eternal processions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; thus, the intense carnal longing often called lust is merely an imperfect "homing signal" for the lost paradise of Original Justice. If the soul is the unique *forma corporis,* then its intellectual desire for the Absolute Good must naturally overflow into the body's sensitive appetites, manifesting as a holy *eros* that yearns for the *agape* of total and selfless gift.

Furthermore, within the framework of the Theology of the Body, we must recognize that the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" is an ontological truth "wired" into our very physical design, ordering us toward a sincere gift of self (GS 24). If the body is a visible sign of an invisible spiritual reality, then the powerful drive toward union cannot be a formal rejection of God, but is rather a misplaced or "intense" search for the Divine Presence mediated through the flesh. To classify this profound recognition of the other's dignity and the "sacrament of the person" as a vice would be to deny the sacramental transparency of creation and the vocation to communion for which we were created. Therefore, as the object of this desire is a participation in the Divine Beauty, it appears as a celebratory affirmation of our high calling to be icons of God's love rather than a disordered turning away from the Creator. Thus, the carnal impulse remains a sacred medium of grace, manifesting the brilliance of the vocation for which we were created.

On the contrary, the Sacred Scriptures and the perennial Magisterium of the Church provide an unwavering witness to the sinful nature of lust, grounding its malice in the violation of the person's ontological and theological dignity. The Apostle Paul, writing with the authority of the Spirit, commands the faithful to "fly fornication," emphasizing that "he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body," which is a "temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor 6:18-19). This apostolic warning finds its systematic elaboration in the scholastic theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, who defines lust (*luxuria)* as a capital vice precisely because it constitutes a formal *inordinatio,* a disordered pursuit of venereal pleasure that exceeds the boundaries of right reason and the teleological ends of the human person.

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Furthermore, the Catechism of the Catholic Church clarifies that lust is not merely a biological surplus but a "disordered desire" that severs sexual pleasure from its essential unitive and procreative finalities (CCC 2351). In the light of St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, we see that this vice constitutes a "degradation of the sacramentality of the body," replacing the primordial "Nuptial Meaning" with a "libido of possession" that treats the other as an object of utility rather than a subject of communion (MW 32:3) This moral rupture is a direct contradiction of the hylomorphic integrity of the *Imago Dei*; for if the rational soul is the unique *forma corporis*, then to abandon the body to the lawless "inner tilt" of concupiscence is to reject the soul's divine vocation to order the flesh toward the communion of the Holy Trinity. Consequently, the tradition of the Schools and the contemporary.

I answer that, the determination of lust as a formal sin must be understood through the lens of hylomorphic teleology and the sacramental vocation of the human person. According to the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas, the human person, is not a dualistic accidental pairing of two disparate substances, but a substantial union (*unio substantialis*) where the rational soul is the unique *forma corporis*. Because the soul is rational, it participates in the Eternal Law of God; consequently, for any human act to be "good," it must be "informed" by right reason. Lust, by its very essence, is a formal *inordinatio*, a disorder, wherein the concupiscible appetite for venereal pleasure is pursued in a manner that bypasses the governance of the intellect and the orientation of the will toward the Absolute Good. In the Thomistic schema, when the lower passions subvert the higher faculties, the "order of nature" is violated, for it is the nature of man to be guided by reason. Thus, lust is not merely a biological phenomenon but a moral failure to integrate the body's vitality into the person's spiritual end.

Integrating this with the *Theology of the Body,* we perceive that this "disordered desire" constitutes a direct assault on the Nuptial Meaning of the Body. If the body is a "sacrament of the person" a visible sign of the invisible spiritual call to communion, then the sexual impulse is intended to be the "language" of a "sincere gift of self" (GS 24). Lust, however, introduces a "hermeneutics of suspicion" into the heart, replacing the selfless *agape* of the *Imago Dei* with a "libido of possession." In this state of concupiscence, the other is no longer seen as a "someone" to be cherished in their totality as a hylomorphic subject, but this is reduced to a "something", an objective of utility for the egoistic gratification of the subject. This reductionism is a theological lie; it speaks of union with the flesh while rejecting the communion of persons, thereby fracturing the Original Justice that once secured the perfect harmony between reason and passion.

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Furthermore, we must recognize that lust is a sin because it rejects the teleological finality of the sexual act itself, which is inherently ordered toward the procreation of life and the unitive bonding of the spouses. By isolating venereal pleasure from these ends, the person attempts to seize the "pleasure of the gift" while refusing the "responsibility of the gift." This constitutes a turning away from the Unchangeable Good toward a transient, sensible good as if it were an ultimate end (finis ultimus). In the light of the "Great Mystery" of our embodiment (Eph 5:32), the vice of lust is revealed as a refusal to live out the body's vocation as a temple of divine intention. It is a failure to maintain the body as a medium of grace, resulting in a profound interior fragmentation where the forma corporis is obscured by the darkness of a disordered gaze. Therefore, lust is a grave sin precisely because it violates the truth of the human person, the order of reason, and the sacramental transparency through which we are called to echo the eternal, selfless love of the Holy Trinity.

Reply to Objection 1: While it is true that the inclination toward venereal union is rooted in the biological substrate of the human person, the objection fails to distinguish between the *natural appetite* of a material organism and the *rational appetite* of a hylomorphic subject. In the scholastic metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas, the human person is not merely a biological specimen governed by instinct, but a substantial union where the rational soul is the unique *forma corporis*. Consequently, what is “natural” for man is not defined by raw physiological exigency alone, but by that which is in accordance with right reason. As Aquinas argues in his treatment of the Natural Law, the sensitive appetites are “human” only insofar as they participate in the light of the intellect. Therefore, while the procreative urge is a good of nature, lust constitutes a formal disorder because it allows the concupiscible appetite to erupt outside the order of reason, severing the physical impulse from the spiritual end of the person.

Furthermore, integrating the insights of the *Theology of the Body*, we must clarify that the “naturalness” of the sexual impulse was originally experienced as a “transparent spontaneity” within the state of Original Justice. In that primordial state, the body’s “language” was perfectly integrated with the soul’s vocation to a sincere gift of self (GS 24). However, the entrance of sin introduced a “rupture” into our hylomorphic constitution, transforming a holy *eros* into a disordered concupiscence. To claim that lust is a neutral biological necessity is to ignore this ontological fracture; it mistakes the “inner tilt” of our fallen nature for the original design of the Creator. Lust is not the biological drive itself, but the will’s surrender to a “libido of possession” that treats the body as a mere tool for gratification rather than a sacrament of the person.

By justifying lust as a “biological exigency,” the objection inadvertently descends into a reductionism that betrays the dignity of the *Imago Dei.* if the body is truly the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” its operations cannot be reduced to animalistic reflex; they must be elevated by the virtue of temperance to reflect the Trinitarian communion.

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Thus, the carnal impulse only remains "natural" in the theological sense when it is ordered toward the dual ends of unitive love and procreative fruitfulness. Lust, by isolating pleasure from these rational and sacramental ends, acts as a "parasite" upon nature rather than its fulfillment. Therefore, the struggle against this vice is not a rejection of our physical existence, but a noble quest to restore the body to its rightful place as a medium of grace and a faithful witness to the soul's orientation toward the Absolute Good.

Reply to Objection 2: The second objection founders upon a profound misunderstanding of the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" and the nature of the "Original Nakedness" described in the Theology of the Body. While it is ontologically certain that the body is a "sacrament of the person", a visible sign of an invisible spiritual and divine reality, this sacramentality is predicated upon the body's capacity to express the "sincere gift of self" (GS 24). In the Thomistic hylomorphic union, the body as *materia* is only a sacrament insofar as it is informed by the ratio of the soul, which is ordered toward the Absolute Good. Lust, however, is not a celebratory affirmation of this sacramental dignity; rather, it is its formal negation. It constitutes a 'hermeneutics of suspicion", where the "disordered gace" no longer perceives the other as a *persona*, a rational subject to be cherished for their own sake, but reduces the other to an *objectum* of utility and sensible gratification. As St. John Paul II argues, lust does not "surplus" the nuptial meaning but "impoverishes" it, replacing the transparent communication of the spirit with a "libido of possession" that treats the human person as a "something" rather as a "someone" (MW 32:3).

Furthermore, the objection erroneously equates the intense visceral drive of concupiscence with the primordial "holy *eros*" of the beginning. In the state of Original Innocence, there was a perfect "transparency of the heart" where the sensitive appetites were in total concord with the rational will, analogically reflecting the eternal processions of the Holy Trinity. This Original Justice ensured that the attraction to the other was always a "sacramental" movement toward communion. Lust, by contrast, is a "parasitic" energy that feeds upon the body's capacity for love, yet directs it away from the unitive and procreative ends established by Divine Wisdom. It is a "lie" spoken through the language of the body; it attempts to seize the "pleasure of the gift" while formally rejecting the "responsibility of the person." By prioritizing the egoistic satisfaction of the *corpus* over the spiritual vocation of the *spiritus*, lust shatters the hylomorphic harmony and obscures the *Imago Dei*.

Finally, it must be asserted that to label lust as a sin is not a Manichaean rejection of the body's goodness, but a defense of it. To allow the body to be used as a mere instrument of utility is the true "shame" and the true "reduction" of its dignity. The vice of lust is a formal turning away from the Unchangeable Good toward a transient, sensible good as if it were an ultimate end. Therefore, the struggle for chastity is a "noble quest" for the restoration of the body's true identity as a temple of divine intention.

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It is only through the virtue of temperance, which integrates the body's vitality into the person's higher vocation, that we can recover that "sacramental transparency" where the flesh truly manifests the brilliant light of the vocation for which we were made. Consequently, the carnal impulse in its disordered form is not a medium of grace, but a fracture of that grace, necessitating the ascetic discipline of the heart to return to the communion of the Holy Trinity.

Reply to Objection 3: The third objection posits that lust cannot be a sin because it originates as an antecedent passion of the sensitive appetite, prior to the formal consent of the rational will. This argument, while rooted in a partial understanding of Thomistic psychology, fails to grasp the nature of the hylomorphic unity and the moral responsibility of the rational soul as forma corporis. While it is true that the *prima movimenta* (first movements) of the concupiscible appetite that precede reason are not themselves sins in the formal sense, the vice of lust resides not in the involuntary inclination itself, but in the subsequent *delectatio morosa* (morose delectation) and the formal consent of the will. As St. Thomas Aquinas meticulously argues, the sensitive appetite is capable of rebelling against the *imperium* (command) of reason only in the fallen state; in the condition of Original Justice, the lower appetites were perfectly subject to the soul, analogically reflecting the soul's perfect subjection to God. The very presence of an "inner tilt" that precedes reason is the proof of the ontological rupture of Original Sin, which fractured the harmony of the faculties.

Furthermore, we must delve deeper into the *Theology of the Body* to understand the gravity of the will's consent. St. John Paul II explains that in the state of Original Innocence, the heart was characterized by a "transparent spontaneity" where the body's attraction was unified with the spirit's "sincere gift of self." Lust, by contrast, arises precisely when the will *fails* to restore this order through the virtue of temperance. By consenting to the disordered movement, the subject affirms the body as a mere object of utility rather than a *persona* called to communion. The "body-soul" composite is a *human* person, meaning every aspect of its being must be ordered by the *ratio* of the soul. To allow the carnal impulse to govern the will is to invert the metaphysical hierarchy of being, treating the material end as the formal guide for the spiritual faculty. This is not a neutral manifestation of vitality, but a profound theological lie that obscures the *Imago Dei* and denies the body's *forma corporis* (substantial form) its proper dignity.

The objection thus mistakes the *occasion* of sin for the *essence* of sin. The involuntary passions are merely the raw material upon which the moral agent must act. The vice of lust becomes a formal sin when the intellect is clouded (the "blindness of mind," a daughter of lust) and the will freely chooses to remain in that disorder, thereby rejecting the Eternal Law that calls for the integration of all passions under reason. This choice fractures the sacramental transparency and reduces the potential of the body as a medium of grace.

Therefore, the struggle against the first movements is precisely the "noble quest" of asceticism, a moral imperative to restore the soul's rightful dominion over the sensitive appetite, ensuring that our incarnate existence remains a faithful echo of the Trinitarian communion. By consenting to lust, we do not affirm our nature, but rather choose the interior disharmony of concupiscence over the arduous but liberating path of virtue and self-possession.

Reply to Objection 4: The final objection proceeds from a teleological fallacy that conflates a *material participation* in a good with the *formal* rectitude of the moral acct. While it is metaphysically certain, as St. Thomas Aquinas posits that every agent acts for an end that bears the semblance of the Good, the malice of lust lies precisely in the fact that it seizes the “sensible good” while formally rejecting the “rational and spiritual Good” to which it must be subordinated. In the Thomistic hylomorphic framework, the human person is called to a love that is fundamentally “ordered” (*ordinata*); however, lust is an *inordinatio* that treats a created, transient participation in beauty as if it were the Absolute End (*finis ultimis*). To seek union with the *Imago Dei* through the “disordered gaze” of lust is not a holy search for the Divine, but a species of theological idolatry, for it attempts to enjoy the creature (*frui*) while bypassing the Creator, thereby fracturing the analogy of Trinitarian life.

Furthermore, when viewed through the *Theology of the Body*, the claim that lust is a "homing signal" for paradise is revealed as a half-truth that masks a profound deception. In the state of Original Justice, the "Nuptial Meaning of the Body" was experienced as a transparent and sacrificial "sincere gift of self" (GS 24). Lust, however, is the ontological antithesis of this gift; it is a "libido of possession" that severs the body’s "language of love" from its essential unitive and procreative finalities. By isolating the venereal pleasure from the communion of persons and the openness to life, the subject does not celebrate the "sacrament of the person" but rather commits a "sacrilegious reduction," treating a "someone" as a "something" for egoistic utility.

Moreover, the objection’s appeal to the soul as *forma corporis* actually serves to condemn the vice, for if the rational soul truly informs the body, then the body’s appetites must be governed by the soul’s highest faculties, intellect and will. Lust represents a "materialization" of the spirit, where the soul’s intellectual desire for the Infinite is "dragged down" and suffocated by the density of a disordered carnal impulse. This results in a blindness of mind (*caecitas mentis*), a daughter of lust that renders the person incapable of perceiving the very "Divine Presence" they claim to seek. The "inner tilt" of concupiscence is not a holy *eros* but a fractured remnant of it, a disordered leaning that requires the restorative grace of the "Redemption of the Body" to be set right.

Finally, the struggle against lust is the only path that truly honors the body's vocation to be a "temple of divine intention." To seek God through the medium of the flesh requires the virtue of temperance, which integrates the body’s vitality into the person's total orientation toward the Beatific Vision. By refusing to reduce the other to an object of utility, the chaste person affirms the true Trinitarian analogy a communion of persons characterized by total, reciprocal, and fruitful self-gift. Therefore, lust is not an imperfect search for the Divine, but a formal turning away from the Unchangeable Good toward a shadow of it, replacing the "Great Mystery" of love with the small, closed circle of self-absorption. Only by rejecting this disordered impulse can the human person hope to see the other in the "unbearable light of glory" and fulfill the vocation for which they were created as a unified witness to the communion of the Holy Trinity.

Q1:A2 - Whether Lust is a Mortal Sin by its Genus?

Objection 1: It would seem that lust (*luxuria*) is not a mortal sin by its genus. For as the Angelic Doctor establishes in the structural hierarchy of moral acts, a sin is classified as mortal only when it brings about the "death of the soul," an effect which occurs solely when the soul is formally "turned away" (*aversio*) from the Unchangeable Good and "turned toward" (*conversio*) a transitory good as if it were the Ultimate End (*Summa Theologiae* (ST) I-II, Q. 88, A. 1). Lust, however, is defined specifically as an inordinate pursuit of "venereal pleasure", a carnal delight that God has ontologically annexed to the biological preservation of the species for the sake of the common good. Because the object of the act is a finite, created good, the soul's "turning toward" it does not, by the mere nature of the genus, necessitate a formal rejection of the Sovereign Good.

As St. Thomas argues in ST II-II, Q. 153, A. 3, carnal sins possess "less of the nature of guilt" than spiritual sins because they are characterized by a pull toward the sensible rather than a direct, prideful contempt for the Divine Rule. If the sinner seeks the "delight of the touch" without explicitly establishing that delight as his final beatitude in place of God, he remains like a traveler who "lingers inordinately" at an intermediate station; while he errs in the "mode" of his journey, he has not abandoned the "principle" of his movement toward the Creator. Thus, lust appears to be a disorder regarding the "means" of human life, namely, the use of the generative powers, rather than a total subversion of the End, which is charity.

Furthermore we must consider the hylomorphic infirmity of the human person in the state of "historical man" as it relates to the *unio substantialis*. St. John Paul II, in his *Theology of the Body*, observes that since the collapse of Original Justice, the human person suffers from a "fragmentation" of his internal powers, where the "language of the body" is no longer perfectly subject to the "sovereignty of the spirit" (*Man and Woman He Created Them* [MW] 32:4). In the Thomistic psychology of the passions, the "vehemence" of the concupiscible appetite (*appetitus sensitivitus*) can so "fetter" or "cloud" the judgement of reason that the act loses the character of "perfect voluntariness" required for mortal gravity (ST I-II, Q. 77, A. 2). Since mortal sin requires full knowledge and complete consent, and since the very genus of lust consists in the "clouding of reason" by the intensity of the flesh (*obscuratio rationis*), it follows that the act often precedes or overwhelms the deliberative power of the soul. A sin that originates in the "tinder of sin" (*fomes peccati*) and the "blind impulse" of biological necessity is a "sickness" of the composite nature rather than a death of the spiritual person.

Moreover, the disorder of lust frequently consists in an "excess of quantity" or a "failure of measure" regarding a matter that is *per se* lawful, such as the pursuit of the "nuptial meaning of the body." St. Thomas argues in ST I-II, Q.88, A. 2 that sins consisting in an "excess of mode" regarding a lawful object are generally venial. Because the virtue of temperance concerns the most pervasive and difficult of all human passions to restrain, a failure therein is a defect of "measure" rather than a "betrayal" of the person. If the ontological structure of the sexual sign remains oriented toward the person as in an inordinate affection for one's spouse, the sin does not strike at the root of the Imago Dei but merely obscures its radiance.

Finally, since the gravity of a sin is measured by the dignity of the virtue it opposes, and lust opposes the virtue of temperance which resides in the sensitive appetite, it cannot be said to possess the same lethal genus as sins opposing the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, or Charity.

Therefore, since lust concerns the "mode" of the appetite rather than the "annihilation" of the supernatural life, it should be classified as a venial by its genus a spiritual weight that requires the medicine of grace and the fire of purgation, rather than a mortal weight that sinks the soul into eternal perdition.

Objection 2: It would seem that lust (*luxuria*) is not a mortal sin by its genus, by reason of the "infirmity" of the hylomorphic composite and the involuntary nature of the *fomes peccati*. For as the Angelic Doctor distinguishes in the *Summa Theologiae*, a sin is characterized as mortal only when it proceeds from "certain malice" (*ex certa malitia*), which implies a deliberate choice of the will to subvert the Divine Order, whereas a sin proceeding from "infirmity" (*ex infirmitate*) is diminished in its culpability because the will is impelled by a passion residing in the sensitive appetite (ST I-II, Q.77, A. 3). Lust, by its very definition, concerns the "vehemence" of the concupiscible appetite toward venereal delight. Because the soul is the substantial form of the body, the intensity of these carnal passions can so "cloud" or "fetter" the judgement of reason (*obscuratio rationis*) that the act loses the character of "perfect voluntariness" necessary for the destruction of the habit of Charity.

Furthermore, this objection finds profound reinforcement in the anthropological reflections of St. John Paul II regarding the condition of "historical man." In the *Theology of the Body*, the Holy Father observes that since the loss of "Original Justice," the human person exists in a state of "triple concupiscence," where the original "inner integration" of the *Imago Dei* has been fractured (*Man and Woman He Created Them* [MW] 32:4). This fragmentation results in a "spontaneity" of the impulses of the flesh which often precede the deliberative movement of the spirit. If the "language of the body" is uttered through a "blind impulse" of biological necessity or a "reflexive moment" of the sensitive powers, the act cannot be said to constitute a formal *aversio a Deo* (turning away from God). As St. Thomas argues, "the more will is incited to sin by a passion, the less is the sin" (ST I-II Q. 77, A. 4). Since the genus of lust is inherently defined by the most intense and pervasive of all sensitive delight, it follows that the genus itself is one of "maximum incitement" and "minimum deliberation," which is the hallmark of venial infirmity rather than mortal rebellion.

Moreover, we must consider the ontological status of the "tinder of sin" (*fomes peccati*). The concupiscential urge is a vestige of Original Sin that remains even in the justified, acting as a "law in the members" that wars against the "law of the mind" (Romans 7:23). If the genus of lust is simply the "inordinate eruption" of this pre-existing inclination, it behaves more as a "sickness of the member" than a "choice of the person." St. Thomas notes that the first movement of concupiscence (*motus primo-primi*) are not mortal because they do not reach the level of reason's full consent. If the "lust of the eyes" or the "lust of the flesh" arises from the heavy, earthly nature of the body, it constitutes a "weight" that slows the soul's ascent rather than a "blade" that severs its life.

Finally, if the gravity of a sin is measured by its opposition to the "Right Reason of the Person," then a sin that arises from the biological "depths" of the hylomorphic composite which are the furthest removed from the intellectual light, must be judged as the least capable of a formal, spiritual rejection of God. Just as a man who falls due to the slipperiness of the path is not judged as one who willfully walks of a cliff, so the man who falls into lust due to the "slipperiness of the flesh" does not, by his genus, intend to abandon his Eternal Beatitude. Therefore, since the genus of lust is rooted in the "passive" vulnerability of the sensitive appetite to the "fomes" of fallen nature, it should be categorized as venial, a defect of self-possession that requires the healing of the Spirit rather than the total resurrection of the soul from spiritual death.

Objection 3: It would seem that lust (*luxuria*) is not a mortal sin by its genus, by reason of the "materiality" of the disorder and its classification as sin "beside the law" (*praeter legem*) rather than "against the law" (*contra legem*). In the Thomistic architectonic of moral acts, the gravity of sin is fundamentally determined by the "teleological proportion" of the act to the Sovereign Good. St. Thomas argues that a sin is mortal only when it formally subverts the "Order of the End" by destroying the principle of spiritual life, which is Charity. However, when a disorder concerns the "Order of the Means", that is, an inordinate attachment to a created good while the habit of the Ultimate End remains, the sin is categorized as venial (*Summa Theologiae* (ST) I-II, Q. 88, A. 1). Lust, in its generic essence, consists in an "excess of affection" for venereal delight, which is a matter *per se* lawful and necessary for the human species. Because the disorder lies in the "measure" or "mode" of the pursuit rather than in a formal rejection of the Divine Rule, it constitutes a "stumbling" in the use of the means rather than a "desertion" of the End. As the Angelic Doctor posits, a sin that consists in an "excess of quantity" regarding a lawful object is not mortal by its genus unless it explicitly involves a contempt for God or the neighbor (*ST* I-II, Q. 88, A. 2).